Report to the Governor's Forum on Monitoring
from the
Salmon & Watershed Information Management Technical Advisory Committee

Q: Should the Governor's Forum on Monitoring sign the Northwest Environmental Data-Network (NED) MOU?

A: Yes, it affords the state the opportunity to participate and to help guide regional fisheries/habitat related information management activities.

Recommendation:

If the Forum signs the MOU, then the Forum needs to appoint a science/policy representative from its ranks to participate in NED. The MOU can be signed by individual agencies and/or the Forum can sign it.

Rationale

- The MOU does not impose any legal obligation on the state.

- It does ask for active participation by members and a willingness to collaborate and coordinate funding of joint projects.

- It allows all levels of government to participate in and direct projects of mutual interest.

- The focus is on doing a more effective job at collecting and managing fisheries related data.

Q: How does Paladin's technology solution relate to the SWIM Decision Package that was submitted by IAC to OFM?

A: It doesn't relate to the Natural Resource Information Portal Decision Package. It may support the data management needs of individual organizations.

Recommendation:
If the SWIM decision package is approved, then an RFP will be issued with a detailed list of business and system requirements. Selection of a vendor will be based on those requirements and on adherence to existing state data and infrastructure standards.

Rationale

Paladin doesn't offer a technology solution that meets the stated objectives of the decision package submitted to OFM.

The Natural Resource Information Portal requirements include:
- Identification and standardization of primary keys
- Development of data transfer and exchange standards
- GIS internet mapping and integrated reporting
- Ability to link existing state databases via a secured network
- Access to key identified spatial and tabular data sets

The Paladin solution supports two basic functions: project tracking and field data collection. This collection, reporting and sharing of information can support the SWIM Portal vision.

Q: How does the Information Builders Inc (IBI) technology solution relate to the SWIM Decision Package that was submitted by IAC to OFM?

A: It could support a substantial portion of the Natural Resource Information Portal Decision Package.

Recommendation:
If the SWIM decision package is approved, then an RFP will be issued with a detailed list of business and system requirements. Selection of a vendor will be based on those requirements and adherence to existing state standards.

Rationale

Information Builders offers one example of a technology solution that, through a secured network, could link existing agency databases through a common field value in order to report on salmon and watershed indicators.

The Natural Resource Information Portal requirements include:
▪ Identification and standardization of primary keys
▪ Development of data transfer and exchange standards
▪ GIS internet mapping and integrated reporting
▪ Ability to link existing state databases via a secured network
▪ Access to key identified spatial and tabular data sets

Regardless of the technology solution, state agencies do need to agree on and build into their databases key linkage fields (primary keys). Key fields like surface water identification codes (LLID's and associated measures) should be designed and retrofitted into their systems so we can begin to answer the important salmon & watershed health indicator questions.

Q: What does each vendor solution offer the state as it relates to information management for monitoring in state government today?

A: They offer distinctly different and un-related solutions.
- *Paladin* offers a newly developed proprietary database system for entering and managing basic project and field data.
- *Information Builders* offers a network solution to link existing databases so you can begin to ask and answer questions of the data collectively.

Recommendation:
Most of the larger state agencies who are presently maintaining and populating their databases and link their data to GIS should make investments in creating better tools that allow local governments and smaller agencies/commissions to integrate, share and exchange data. *One Example*: Build out the PRISM modules that would allow locals to add project related data via the Internet into PRISM – a one-time cost to develop and deploy this functionality would be about $200,000.

Each state agency needs to make IT decisions based on their individual business needs, but in doing so, organizations should consider using existing databases and how they might be modified to meet their needs. Through partnerships, agencies may be able to leverage their funding and adapt existing systems to meet the needs of multiple organizations.

Regardless of what solution is deemed best by a state organization, an open competitive process should always be used to ensure that the state is getting the best solution based on its needs and existing information standards should be followed.

Rationale

Paladin:
- For organizations that have made investments in project and environmental data tracking systems the Paladin solution doesn't offer anything distinctly new. But, it does consolidate into one place project management and field data collection which may benefit smaller organizations.
- For organizations that are looking for a new system that's easy to use and doesn't require detailed field data entry, it provides a good entry-level solution.
- For local governments, such as Conservation Districts, it could provide local data to state agencies, that to date, hasn't been available.
- Paladin's solution in comparison to other existing systems:

- It's relatively new and is still being developed which means growing pains for both the vendor and the client.
- It's not currently integrated with a fully functional GIS.
- It may not be robust enough to record environmental field data at a sufficiently detailed level for some needs.
- It uses yet another set of data standards that are different than what is used in existing state systems.

Information Builders:
- For organizations that have been collecting data in existing and legacy databases it offers the ability to link those databases together with GIS and allows custom reporting over the Internet.
- For organizations that are just beginning to develop and use database systems it offers the ability to tie their data with Internet mapping and custom reporting tools on the web.